

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR CHILDREN



Response to Analysis R00A04 INTERAGENCY FUND

Arlene F. Lee, Executive Director

**FY 2007 BUDGET
2006 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

INTERAGENCY FUND

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Analyst Comment–Youth Strategies Initiative

It is recommended that the transferred funding also be awarded on a competitive basis through the Youth Strategies Initiative.

Children's Cabinet Response

- Please see our response under Issue #3.

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Analyst Comment – Out-of-state Placements

The Children's Cabinet should comment on the factors leading to the increase in out-of-state placements since fiscal 2002, the estimated magnitude of future increases due to the closure of the Hickey School, and current efforts being made to continue to reduce out-of-state placements.

Children's Cabinet Response

The out-of-state changes are in part due to a change in the definition of the out-of-state placements to be tracked by the SCC and LCC and a number of events impacting the capacity of the State to serve children in-state are the main factors for the increase in out-of-state placements since fiscal year 2002. The following is a listing of the factors leading to the increase, an estimate for the fiscal year 2006 increase in out-of-state placements for DJS youth, and current efforts to reduce out-of-state placements.

Factors

- Definition shift: SCC/LCC regulations codified in 2004 expanded the LCC's authority to track out-of-state placements not only for RTCs but also group homes, alternative living units, hospitalization when indicated for mental health/behavioral purpose, and wilderness camps (Section .03 of the SCC/LCC regulations that define out-of-state placements).
- In the past, the SCC's Program Review Committee (PRC) heard 6 to 8 cases per month, now the PRC is hearing 10 to 14 cases per month due to the closing of Edgemeade, moratorium on placements at the Chesapeake Youth Center, restrictions on the Grafton School, the closing of Hickey and other reductions in placement options
- The total DJS youth reviewed at PRC/SCC totals 75 to date.

Current Efforts to reduce Out-of-State Placements (but not limited to)

- 1.5 Million Dollars in Resource Development funding in the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund to support new programs
- The Child Welfare League's Nexus workgroup involving the Family League of Baltimore City, DJJ and DHR to address the needs of difficult to place teens in Baltimore City involved in both systems
- Children's Mental Health Initiative to provide assessments and treatment for children and youth in both DHR and DJS to ensure appropriate placements

- DJS request for proposal targeting the creation of in-state services and programs
- Single Point of Entry and group home systems improvements
- Increased funding capacity of Core Service Agency children from \$70,000 to \$100,000
- In Baltimore City, DJS pilot projects to keep DJS youth in their communities
- Wraparound project—two pilot projects have gotten underway in Baltimore City and Montgomery County
- New foster home recruitment and retention efforts

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Analyst Comment– Family Preservation

The Executive Director should comment on the increases experienced in reported findings within one year of case closure and whether additional follow-up services are necessary to reverse the upward trend in this measure.

Children's Cabinet Response

- In part the changes reflect the significant policy changes made to tighten eligibility requirements following the close of the 2004 legislative session (last quarter of FY04). These changes have resulted in lower levels of family functioning both initially and after services for the population served based on NCFAS scores for this population as reflected in the out-of-home placement report for FY05 (first full year of implementation). The Baltimore City LMB indicated that they began to tighten eligibility during the last quarter of FY04.
- DHR has been developing and implementing risk-based service planning as part of its Federal Program Improvement Plan. Risk-based service planning is premised on the principle that a family preservation case will not be closed unless the level of risk for the children is low. DHR is already under contract with the University of Maryland to provide risk-based service planning to its casework staff (focusing on how to build an appropriate service plan given a family's risk assessment), and DHR is developing guidelines on when, given a family's risk assessment, it is safe to close the case. These developments are underway and will continue to drive casework practice for DHR child welfare services. **We will make recommendations to the Children's Cabinet to incorporate the appropriate portions of the guidelines developed by DHR into the interagency family preservation program.**
- Currently step down services are available for up to 120 days after the completion of the intensive 42 day-phase (up to 42 days). At least thirteen jurisdictions utilized a step down component in their IFPS in FY04. In FY06, all jurisdictions except Baltimore City will have a step down component. It is thought that the provision of step down services may decrease the likelihood of an indicated finding of abuse or neglect after case closure because families receive up to 4 months of additional (low to moderate) intervention to help them to strengthen gains made in family functioning during the intensive phase of service. The FY06 data should provide some initial insight about this.

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Analyst Request-Resource Development

Because details on how this funding will be utilized are not yet known, language restricting the funds until the OC submits a report on the use of the funds is recommended.

Children's Cabinet Response

- Please see response under Recommendation #3.

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Analyst Request- **LMB Administrative Funding**

Budget bill language is recommended to restrict administrative funding to the greater of \$200,000 or 15% of programmatic spending in each jurisdiction.

Children's Cabinet Response

- Please see response under Recommendation #1.

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Refer: Analyst's Issue #1

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Analyst Issue-Out-of-Home Placement Outcome Evaluation System

The Executive Director should brief the committees on the progress of efforts to complete the outcomes evaluation model and likely magnitude of additional resources that will be needed to implement the system.

Children's Cabinet Response

The Governor's Office for Children has convened meetings with the University and with all the Chief Information Officers from each child-serving agency. The process is underway to evaluate the best data collection approach. There should be a plan about the cost when the report is submitted in July 1, 2006.

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Analyst Issue-**State Resource Plan**

The Executive Director should brief the committees on the status of development of the resource plan and other efforts being made to increase residential care capacity in underserved areas of the State.

Children's Cabinet Response

The Resource plan is currently being reviewed and should be available for release by the end of March. The new funding included in the Governor's allowance for Resource Development was included specifically to help address residential care capacity in the underserved areas of the State.

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Refer: Analyst's Issue #3

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Analyst Issue-Youth Strategies Initiative

It is recommended that language be added to the budget to require the new delinquency funds to be distributed through the Youth Strategies Initiative.

Children's Cabinet Response

Although we agree, in part, with the analyst's comments relating to current Children Cabinet funding methodology, we believe that changing the methodology for this funding at this time would not provide the current vendors with sufficient time to find alternative funding. In addition the Children's Cabinet should be given the opportunity to assess the current contracts and work with these vendors to move these contracts towards outcome based contracting. Additionally, the Youth Strategies Initiative was a 5 year project that is in its fifth year, therefore the Youth Strategies approach may be utilized in the future but the actual Youth Strategies Initiative will not be a vehicle after this fiscal year.

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Refer: Analyst's Recommendation #1

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Analyst Recommendation- LMB Administrative Funding

Add the following language:

Provided that no Local Management Board may receive funds for administrative expenses in excess of the greater of \$200,000 or 15 percent of the programmatic funds allocated to the Local Management Board.

Children's Cabinet Response

We agree in part and disagree in part. We agree that a floor of \$200,000 is appropriate, but disagree that any funding over that amount should be capped by any percent of program expenditures for the following reasons:

- LMBs are not about simply managing the program dollars and, in fact, the program dollar amount has very little to do with the amount of work performed by an LMB. LMBs are the core of the local service delivery system, which requires integration and interagency collaboration to function well. LMBs ensure the integration and collaboration, which does not occur naturally between agencies.

Interagency Collaboration requires several components to ensure success, all of which are the core functions of LMBs-

- a mandate that requires both the cross-system effort and the desired outcomes - By local statute or resolution, and hopefully by state statute again soon, LMBs have the appropriate mandate to ensure that local agencies will participate.
- leadership - LMBs provide the leadership to guide partners around the resistance to change and keep the work focused on the results that the board is trying to achieve in their jurisdiction.
- staff support - LMB staff do more than administer programs, they provide the staff support to the boards. The 5 year plans developed by each LMB required staff to conduct research, evaluation, focus groups, community meetings and retreats. The plans are the basis for the interagency work that occurs in each jurisdiction to improve outcomes for children. It is how Anne Arundel County decided to focus on early childhood mental health, or how Allegany County decided to focus on a Multi-agency team to create interagency service plans for children. Neither process was dependent upon the program dollars being administered.
- commitment at the service delivery level - LMBs act as that neutral convener, up to and including a process on the lower shore that is creating a provider council to assist with the development of program resources and integrated services that are both public and private.

- an accountability system - LMBs utilize two levels of accountability: the Child Well-being Results and Indicators to establish a report card on child outcomes in the jurisdiction and performance measures to establish the success of individual programs. Both levels of accountability are critical and neither is dependent upon the amount of program dollars. The Well-being Results and Indicators is work that occurs outside of the administration of programs but is critical in helping to establish a plan for what programs and services are needed.
- Neutrality - LMBs provide a neutrality that is not possible in any other entity, and that neutrality is vital to the work that we do as a State to make the service delivery system effective for families and children.

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Refer: Analyst's Recommendation #2

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Analyst Recommendation-Youth Strategies Initiative

Add the following language:

Provided that \$1,231,695 of this appropriation intended for juvenile delinquency prevention efforts being transferred from the Department of Juvenile Services may only be awarded on a competitive basis through the Youth Strategies Initiative.

Children's Cabinet Response

Again as stated in the response to Issue 3 - Although we agree, in part, with the analyst's comments relating to current Children Cabinet funding methodology, we believe that changing the methodology for this funding at this time would not provide the current vendors with sufficient time to find alternative funding. In addition the Children's Cabinet should be given the opportunity to assess the current contracts and work with these vendors to move these contracts towards outcome based contracting.

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Analyst Recommendation –Resource Development

Add the following language:

Further provided that the funds budgeted for Resource Development may not be expended until:

1. The Office for Children has submitted a report to the budget committees detailing how the funds will be spent; and
2. The committees have reviewed and commented on the report or 45 days have elapsed from the date the committees received the report.

Children's Cabinet Response

We concur and will submit the required report to the budget committee.

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Analyst Recommendation –Wraparound

Total General Fund Reductions: \$500,000

Reduce funds budgeted to expand Wraparound pilot projects. The fiscal 2006 budget included \$1 million for Wraparound pilot projects in Montgomery County and Baltimore City. The fiscal 2007 allowance includes an additional \$2 million comprising \$1 million to annualize the two existing pilots and \$1 million to start up new pilots in up to two rural jurisdictions and one additional urban/suburban jurisdiction. Because the effectiveness of the existing pilot projects cannot be evaluated until several years of data is collected, funding should only be allowed to start a pilot in one rural jurisdiction. Expansion of this program beyond the three pilots should only be done once the program has data showing that this model of service delivery is effective in Maryland.

Children's Cabinet Response

We disagree with the recommended reduction. We believe that the requested number of pilot sites are needed to adequately measure the outcomes of this strategy. It is imperative to also pilot wraparound in rural, suburban and multi-jurisdictional sites. This will also help us identify creative financing models. The current sites are in an urban area and a large suburb.

Readiness to Expand

The allocated funds will allow Maryland's Wraparound to expand to additional jurisdictions. There is the potential to expand both under the Medicaid Model that is being implemented in Baltimore City and Montgomery County (the waiver that was filed allows for up to 750 youth to be served across the State) as well as in varied models in both rural and smaller suburban jurisdictions. Over the past two years the Local Management Boards (LMBs) have been engaged in an intensive Local Access Mechanism (LAM) training and planning process. Many of the strategies that the LMBs have identified, and in many cases, have implemented in their LAM plans are the same strategies that will support additional high-fidelity Wraparound jurisdictions. Several jurisdictions have both expressed interest in becoming Wraparound sites and have demonstrated the capacity to successfully implement Wraparound projects that will be variations of the structure of the projects in Baltimore City and Montgomery County but still loyal to Maryland's high-fidelity model. In order for Maryland's Systems of Care to fully mature and be effective, it is imperative to pilot Wraparound in rural, suburban and multi-jurisdictional sites.

Demonstrated Outcomes

While the effectiveness of the Baltimore City and Montgomery County projects is not available at this time, there is substantial data across the Nation to support positive outcomes for youth who participate in high-fidelity wraparound projects. Two examples are found in

Indianapolis and Cincinnati. Both of those projects are run by Choices, the same organization that both Baltimore City and Montgomery County have contracted with to run their respective wraparound projects.

Indianapolis Choices Outcomes (DAWN Project):

Nearly two-thirds of young people leave Indianapolis Choices meeting the goals established by their Child Family Team:

- Functioning in several life domain areas improves, as measured by CAFAS (Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale)
- Educationally, grades, attendance and discipline are all improved
- External and internalizing symptoms are reduced, as assessed with the Child Behavior Checklist
- Strengths are increased, as determined by the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale

Caregivers of young people in Indianapolis Choices report:

- Satisfaction with the services, cultural competence, and family centeredness
- 30% - 40% reported improvements in their income due to Indianapolis Choices support
- Reported a decrease in the amount of strain they experience as caregivers of young people with multiple challenges as evidenced by a 63% of caregivers reporting that Indianapolis Choices and the services the child received through the team process helped increase the caregivers ability to work

Hamilton Choices (Cincinnati) Outcomes:

1. Improved functioning of enrolled youth as measured by average decreases in 8-Scale CAFAS totals, this is a clinically significant improvement
2. After 16 months of operation, a steady decrease in monthly paid residential treatment days for enrolled youth
 - From 24.75% at the first month of operation to 15.85% at the sixteen month mark
3. After 16 months of operation, a steady decrease in percent of enrolled youth who experience any monthly residential treatment episode
 - From 27% at the first month of operation to 18% at the sixteen month mark